



County of Fresno  
**Office of the District Attorney**  
Elizabeth A. Egan, District Attorney

**NEWS STATEMENT FROM THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
**RE: PEOPLE V. SERRATO, RAYMO & BAKER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 12, 2013

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FRESNO, CA - Fresno County District Attorney Elizabeth A. Egan was joined by Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer as she detailed the charges filed against 28-year-old Leonard Louis Serrato, 24-year-old Aaron Joseph Raymo and 22-year-old Daniel Woodard Baker who were members of the now closed Fresno Chapter of the Theta Chi Fraternity for their actions in the hazing death of California State University, Fresno student Philip Dhanens on August 31, 2012.

According to DA Egan, Philip Dhanens, an eighteen year old freshman from Bakersfield, CA, drank a deadly amount of alcohol during the initiation of new members into the Theta Chi fraternity.

Today, March 12, 2013, District Attorney Egan filed a complaint charging each defendant with Misdemeanor violations of Penal Code Section 245.6(a), Hazing, and of Business and Profession Code Section 25658(c), Providing Alcohol to a Person Under 21 Years of Age Proximately Causing Death.

While these defendants have no prior criminal history and the evidence does not show that they intended for Mr. Dhanens to die, their actions led to deadly results requiring criminal intervention to hold them accountable. No charges were brought against other members of the fraternity. The charges carry a jail sentence of six months to one year in custody and a fine of up to \$5000.

During the fraternity event, Mr. Dhanens was provided with enough alcohol for his blood alcohol to reach a level of .40, a toxic amount that is more than five times the blood alcohol level to legally operate a vehicle in California. The Coroner's office confirmed that the death of Philip Dhanens was due to acute alcohol poisoning.

Serrato, Raymo and Baker will be scheduled for arraignment in Superior Court.

DA Egan stated that according to HazingPrevention.org, "82% of deaths from hazing involve alcohol."<sup>1</sup>

Across the country since 2010, student deaths from binge drinking and hazing events have increased. Attempts to raise awareness of the dangers of binge drinking have

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<sup>1</sup> [www.HazingPrevention.org](http://www.HazingPrevention.org)

been slow to deter young people leading to early and 100% preventable deaths. Each year across the country as parents say farewell to their children as they leave home to attend college, it is society's job to raise the level of awareness to the lethal danger of binge drinking.

Yearly, young adults die as a result of binge drinking however many more are irreversibly damaged as a result of alcohol related injuries and poisoning.

In Fresno County, individuals who provide alcohol to underage youth will be held responsible. In many instances, those providing alcohol to minors are friends and acquaintances; and their actions are irresponsible and unlawful.

The prosecutor on this case has been in contact with Philip Dhanens' family who have demonstrated tremendous patience during this detailed investigation.

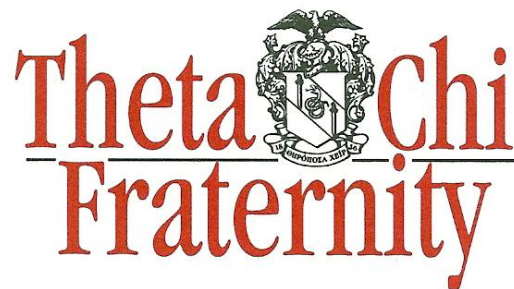
"The loss of any life because of dangerous drinking causes anguish for classmates, schools, communities and most of all for families. Philip Dhanens' death has focused attention across the country on dangerous drinking and its consequences," stated DA Egan.

"Dangerous drinking is a national problem that must be addressed on many fronts and by all concerned. It is our responsibility to work together with students to ensure young people understand the risks of dangerous drinking."

"Every death of our bright young sons and daughters diminishes all of us."

District Attorney Egan thanked the Fresno Police Department for their thorough investigation of this case.

**###end###**



## **International Headquarters**

### **Statement regarding charges filed against Daniel Baker, Aaron Raymo, and Leonard Serrato**

Theta Chi has learned that the Fresno County, California District Attorney has filed charges against Daniel Baker, Aaron Raymo, and Leonard Serrato in connection with the events leading up to the tragic death of Philip Dhanens. Philip passed away on September 2, 2012.

Theta Chi Fraternity continues to keep in its thoughts and prayers Philip's parents, his family, and all those affected by Philip's passing. Fraternity representatives attended Philip's funeral Mass, had the opportunity to meet Philip's family members, and were grateful to be a part of such a moving service.

In October 2012, the Grand Chapter, Theta Chi Fraternity's international board of directors, unanimously voted to revoke the charter of the Beta Upsilon Chapter at Fresno State University. The decision to revoke the charter was taken following the receipt of reports in the days and weeks following Philip's death. The reports indicated that violations of Theta Chi Fraternity's policies occurred within the chapter. The International Fraternity continues to maintain its commitment to cooperate with local authorities and University administrators throughout their investigations.

The revocation of the charter is the most serious action the Grand Chapter may take against a chapter. This action carried with it the full support of the chapter's alumni leadership and Fresno State officials. The Beta Upsilon Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity was chartered at Fresno State in 1942. More than 1,300 men have been initiated into the Chapter at Fresno State throughout its 70-year history.

Theta Chi Fraternity has strict guidelines prohibiting underage alcohol consumption and a strict anti-hazing policy. The International Fraternity expects its chapters and members to uphold these policies and to follow all applicable laws. Theta Chi also provides education and resources on responsible alcohol use and hazing prevention through its regional and national leadership programs, its website, and other programs such as its anti-hazing hotline and sponsorship of programs like [hazingprevention.org](http://hazingprevention.org).

Founded in 1856, Theta Chi Fraternity is a men's collegiate fraternity with over 170,000 initiated members and has established 222 chapters. Leadership development, personal development, character development and service to alma mater are fundamental to Theta Chi Fraternity's mission.